

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) BOARD MEETING

Date: March 7, 2007

Time: 10:03 A.M.

Location: 10 N. Senate Avenue, Room 301A
Indianapolis, IN 46204

PRESENT: Bob Dickerson, President; Barry Baer (via phone), Mo Davison, Tom Hargrove (via phone), Samuel Schlosser, Sean Seyferth, and Dave Thomas—Members. Also in attendance were: Andrew Penca, Commissioner; William McCoskey, Deputy Commissioner, Employment Growth; Teresa Voors, Chief Legal Counsel; Scott Sanders, Chief Financial Officer; and John Ruckelshaus, Deputy Commissioner Government Affairs.

- Called to order by Bob Dickerson
- Quorum was present

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT:

- Mr. Penca noted that he would just like to bring the Board up to speed on a few items—
 - ♦ The debit card program is fully operational and checks are no longer being issued. While there have been a few isolated issues, overall the program is running smoothly.
 - ♦ When UPLink went on line February 7th, Mr. Penca noted, he listened in on about fifteen calls in the Call Center. During that time there were two issues he kept hearing. One was in regards to passwords/user name upgrades. While the other had to do with the “able and available” question. The agency feels the later issue is occurring because of the wording of the question—in the old system the way the question was worded the answer was “no”, in the new system it is worded so that the “correct” answer is “yes”. The agency is looking to make the clients aware that there have been changes to the query screens, pointing out that there have been changes to the system and that they should be sure to read carefully before they respond. Mr. McCoskey concurred that staff are working to address some of the communication issues in relation to the new system, as well as working on internal communications in dealing with UI issues. His staff, as well as local office staff, are working together to come up with a set of procedures and policies that will hopefully address most of the issues, Mr. McCoskey added. Also, additional staff have been hired in the Call Center which will address another issue many clients have articulated—not being able to speak to someone live. In closing Mr. McCoskey noted that he wanted to assure the Board that the agency was very well aware of these issues, and he wanted to assure them the agency is taking steps to address them.
 - ♦ A \$1.5 million training grant was awarded to the Region 9 Workforce Board, in southeast Indiana, from the Strategic Skills Initiative (SSI) for their “Jump Start” training program. This will train around 500 people in the advanced manufacturing arena.

- ♦ Also benefiting from SSI funds the Indiana Bio-Manufacturing and Training Institute will break ground in Bloomington this spring—which will offer training in areas such as clean-room technology and will also develop bio-medical certificates and credentials (specifically for firms in the area). The facility should be up and running, Mr. Penca noted, within two years.
- ♦ The Orthopedic Center of Excellence in Warsaw—which began classes in November—is starting to “crank folks out” and get them in facilities in the area that need people with the skills obtained there.
- ♦ Mr. Penca noted a couple of events the Board might want to attend if they found they had the time—
 - The *FIRST* (For Inspiration & Recognition of Science and Technology) Boilermaker Regional Robotics Competition March 15-17, 2007 at the Purdue University Armory in West Lafayette. Mr. Penca explained the FIRST program is open to high school students around the state who form teams and build robots, alongside real world engineers, in six weeks based on a challenge put out by the FIRST organization. They then compete in regional and then perhaps national competitions. A couple of the teams participating in this competition received funding through the agency’s robotics program, Mr. Penca noted.
 - Tentatively the agency is planning a “first annual summit” if you will for Strategic Skills for July 10, 2007 in Indianapolis. This would afford the Board an opportunity to see some of the work that is happening on a regional basis around the state. The summit will also give representatives a chance to discuss some of their successes, failures, and things that they would have done differently.
 - Mr. Dickerson also noted the first annual Hoosier Vet Job Fair was going to take place on April 25th, at the AMVETS on Lafayette Rd. (Indianapolis). Mr. Penca concurred, adding that the agency’s Veteran’s Affairs group had been quite active of late—giving some brief examples of their work.
- ♦ Mr. Seyferth asked if the agency was doing anything with regards to the big layoffs around the state (e.g., in Anderson, in Kokomo)—as far as going to those plants/employees and encouraging them to consider relocation to places such as the Honda plant. Mr. Penca replied that typically within 24-hours of the notification of mass lay-offs contact will be made with the companies and/or unions and the agency will typically initiate an on-site meeting to discuss various options—including possible opportunities at plants, such as Honda, and possible training programs for affected employees.

OLD BUSINESS:

- The minutes of the February 7, 2007 meeting were unanimously adopted on a motion by Mr. Thomas with a second by Mr. Seyferth; all members present signed the official Minute Book.

- Regarding the Board's *2005-2006 Annual Report*, Mr. McCoskey noted that there were still some areas where information needed to be updated. Mr. McCoskey continued by stating that he hoped to have the current information plugged in and a final draft to the Board prior to April's meeting—so that he could get final comments/corrections and proceed with normal distribution procedures. Mr. McCoskey added that while he had received no comments/corrections since distribution of the first draft last month, he still welcomed any input from the Board.
- Mr. McCoskey turned the floor over to Ms. Voors to update the Board on its current vacancy (large employer). Ms. Voors noted that she had been in contact with the Governor's office regarding the vacancy and the current plan was to offer the position to someone from northeast Indiana who is working for a large employer in the bio-medical field.
- Mr. Ruckelshaus updated the Board on several bills before the General Assembly that he felt could be of interest to them—as they would affect IDWD and could impact UI programs. HB 1221 and HB 1132—which he had covered at the February meeting—had passed through the House and had been sent to the Senate for the next phase of the approval process. In addition, SB 186 and SB 400—which he had also covered at the February meeting—were passed through the Senate and had been sent to the House for the next phase of the approval process. Also, while not mentioned at the February meeting, SB 345—a bill that repeals the provision establishing the Vocational Technical Proficiency Panel (aka, Workforce Proficiency Panel)—had also passed the Senate and was now in committee in the House. Mr. Ruckelshaus added that if the Board would like a hard copy of any or all of these Bills they should let him know. Mr. Ruckelshaus closed by briefly eulogizing Senator Anita Bowser for her contributions to her area and the State. Mr. Seyferth asked if there had been any Bills “pursued on behalf of the Board”. Mr. Ruckelshaus replied no; and, Ms. Voors added that had there been the Board would have been kept advised.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Mr. Sanders came before the Board to present an amended Resolution—in accordance with IC 22-4-25-1—for administrative expenses that are accrued by the Board on an annual basis. The agency sought to add an additional fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000.00) to the original request of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000.00)—which was made and approved at the Board's July 5, 2005, meeting—as the original funds had been exhausted. After discussion a motion was made by Mr. Seyferth, and seconded by Mr. Thomas to approve the amended Resolution—which was then unanimously approved by the Board. As a heads up, Mr. Sanders added that at a future meeting he planned to bring some Resolutions before the Board to rescind some Resolutions involving funds that the Board had previously passed that were either not expended or were not fully expended—allowing the monies to become unencumbered and released back to the P&I Fund.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

- Mr. Baer asked if there was a theory as to why the months of benefits (5.88) in the Trust Fund were so low—as shown in the *Trust Fund Preliminary Analysis for Feb*

2007. Mr. Penca replied that the largest factor was likely that historically the Trust Fund is generally at its lowest during the 4th quarter collection cycle, as contributions to the Fund are at their lowest of the four quarters. Unfortunately, Mr. Penca added this would also be the time of the year when claims loads are generally at their highest. When 1st quarter reports are filed—late April, early May—the number of months in the Trust Fund should spike significantly, Mr. Penca noted, as this is the quarter when the most money goes into the Fund.

- Mr. Davison noted that as his term was to expire March 31st, he would like to be notified as soon as possible, if he were not going to be re-appointed—to which Mr. Seyferth agreed, as his term would be expiring as well. Ms. Voors agreed to notify Mr. Davison and Mr. Seyferth as soon as she was made aware of the Governor's decision regarding the status of their appointments.
- For the record, Mr. Baer wanted to note how much he appreciated Mr. Penca taking time out to personally give his report at the beginning of each meeting and take questions.

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting was adjourned at 11:59 a.m.

REVIEW OF MEETINGS: Next meeting is April 4, 2007, at 10:00 a.m., at IDWD's Administrative Office. This is the Board's Annual meeting with election of officers.